



**TESTIMONY ON MICHIGAN SB 288**  
**Presented by Vicki Deisner, Midwest Legislative Director**  
**Before the Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes**  
**Thursday, April 11, 2013**

Chairman Casperson, Vice-Chairman Pavlov, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes, I am Vicki Deisner, the Midwest Legislative Director for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). The ASPCA, founded in 1866, is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. The ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As part of our national effort to assist local anti-cruelty efforts on the ground the ASPCA provides grants to local communities. In fact, over the last several years we have awarded over \$600,000 to communities throughout Michigan. On behalf of our approximately 2.5 million members and supporters, including over 60,000 Michigan citizens, we respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes to vote NO on SB 288 – a bill that would take away the right for Michiganders to have a voice regarding our state's wildlife. SB 288 would put all the authority to determine the fate of Michigan's wildlife in the hands of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – without any public notice.

Michiganders enjoy living in and participating in the tradition of 'Pure Michigan' – a state that is bountiful in nature and wildlife. Michiganders are invested in their homes, the land, and the nature of Michigan – and have had a longstanding tradition of protecting wildlife that they view as a significant part of 'Pure Michigan'. As a previous resident of the Petoskey area, I know that much of Northern Michigan's economy is based on residents and tourists that enjoy the wilderness, the lakes and rivers – in all four seasons. The majority of Michiganders feel a balanced ecosystem, including wildlife, is part of the 'Pure Michigan' experience.

Michiganders feel strongly that a protected population of wolves in Michigan is part of that 'Pure Michigan' experience. For example, in 2010 Michigan State University conducted a statewide public opinion poll and found that a large majority of Michigan residents agreed that wolves have value, and only a minority agreed they would hunt or trap wolves if such activities were legal. The study adds "Most residents, including hunters, Northern Lower Peninsula residents and minorities highly value wolves and are not interested in hunting them". A 2004 survey by Angela Mertig found overall support for wolf recovery efforts, and that as long as wolves did not injure people, the majority of residents supported a "hands-off" approach. That study reiterated that Michiganders do not support consumptive uses – that is, hunting or trapping – of wolves in Michigan. The public sentiment supporting the protection of wolves has been proven again as over a quarter of a million (250,000+) Michiganders recently signed a petition to stop the trophy hunting of wolves. And this is not an isolated incident in regard to the public feeling strongly regarding the protection of wildlife. In 2006 every county in Michigan voted resoundingly against the target shooting of mourning doves.

Yes, Michigan voters clearly have a longstanding tradition of protecting wildlife and believe they should have the right to continue to do so. But SB 288 is a stunning assault on that voting right – this bill would prevent voters from having a say on these issues. Putting aside the potential constitutional challenge, it flies in the face of the democratic process that Michiganders have always experienced and expect. Michiganders are invested in everything that represents the 'Pure Michigan' experience – which includes the wilderness, the wildlife, and the right to vote to protect it.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge this committee to say NO to SB 288. Thank you for your time and consideration.